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CATALOGUE

OF

Objects Used

BY

A Prehistoric People

In What Is Now

Douglas and Sarpy Counties

Nebraska

Secured Through Exploration Work

of the

Robert F. Gilder

Archeological Survey

of

1907 to 1912

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(234a. Slightly Reduced)

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FOREWORD

Exploration of prehistoric house ruins in Douglas and Sarpy Counties, Nebraska, believed previously to have been depressions caused by bison wallowing in the mud and known to pioneers as "buffalo wallows," was begun by the Robert F. Gilder Archeological Survey in the fall of 1907, north of Ponca creek, in the north part of Douglas county. The exploration moved south along the Missouri river as far as the Platte. In all about forty ruins have been explored and the best objects secured are comprised in the Robert F. Gilder Anthropological Collection, No. 6, in the Omaha Public Library Museum, of which this is the catalogue.

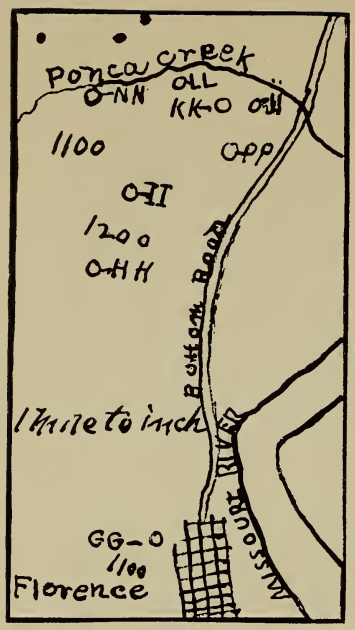
Primarily the archeological survey was begun in order to determine who the people were that erected and lived in the houses before they were destroyed, what became of them and what compelled them to leave Nebraska, what their domestic life was like, as revealed by the things they used in everyday life. This has partially been determined, but the work must be continued a long time before it will be possible to answer all the problems accurately.

Today the house ruins appear as deep or shallow, rather circular, depressions on the high bluffs along the Missouri river. When the accumulations of centuries have been removed it is found the houses were not round, but rectangular, and that the outside walls were the natural earth. Houses of this shape suggest a ridge pole and gables, thereby differing from the shallow circular houses used by Missouri river tribes on the advent of the whites in this section.

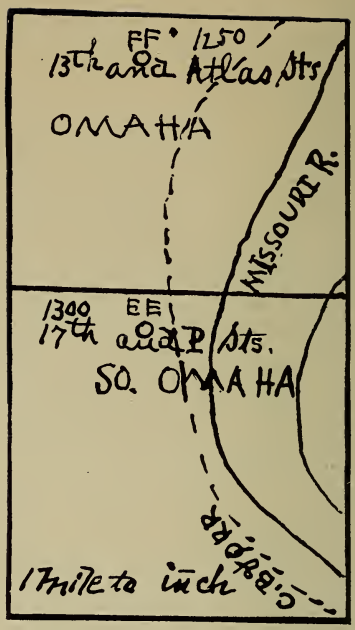
Every object here cataloged came from the house ruins here described, and ownership followed direct from the persons who lived in the house to the explorer. Nothing shown came from the surface, making the history of the intervening years complete.

Every object is numbered. These numbers refer to similar numbers in this catalogue to which are attached one or more letters, the latter indicating the particular ruin the object came from, which is shown upon the accompanying map. Anyone desiring to see the ruin from whence any of these objects came can find the number corresponding to that on the object in the catalogue, and the ruin designated by the letter attached to the number will be found on the map—drawn from a standard publication of the United States Geological Survey.

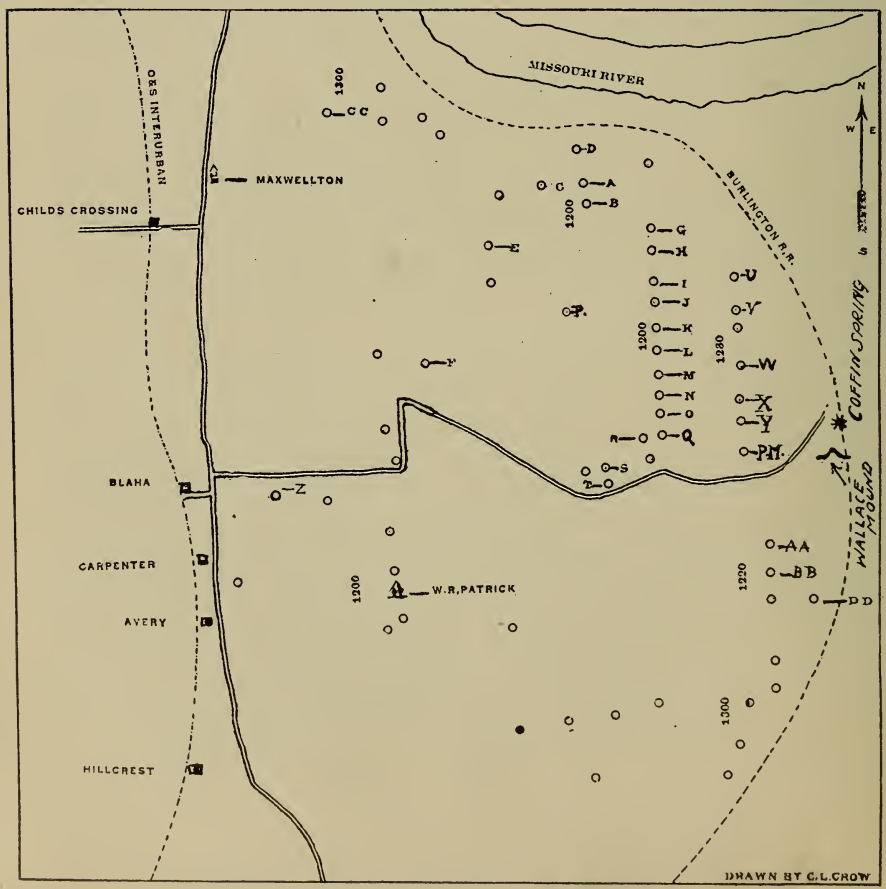
ROBERT F. GILDER.



PONCA CREEK DISTRICT



DOUGLAS COUNTY DISTRICT



CHILDS' POINT DISTRICT—Scale 1½ Inches to Mile

Catalogue

1j, 2n, 3b, 4c, 5k, 6i, 7x, 8h, 9d, 10i, 11j, 12j, 13l. Antler implements. (use unknown).

14aa, 15s, 16x, 17k, 18a. Bone objects of gouge-shape, possibly used in skinning animals. (Highly polished as if by hand).

19p, 20x, 21z, 22d, 23f, 24f, 25e, 25½a. Shell spoons made from unio shells. These spoons are unusually rare. A short handle has been cut in one end to which possibly a haft was tied. (No other collection in the world has more than one shell spoon similar to these).

26k, 27h, 28h, 29x, 30d, 31x, 32i, 33v. Objects of bone and antler supposed to have been used in straightening the shaft of arrows, and called therefor "Arrowshaft Straighteners." One, two and sometimes three holes of different sizes are in one implement.

34s. Split bone. (Possibly used as a handle or haft).

35u, 36u, 37u, 38s, 39f, 40s, 41k, 42aa, 43s, 44d, 45k. Showing three stages of needle making—the leg bone of a deer, the same bone incised lengthwise and a finished needle.

46h, 47k, 48x, 49t, 50t, 51t, 52i, 53i, 54r, 55f, 56r. Bodkins or needles with an eye. (flat, finely made and highly polished).

57s. Flat bone. (use unknown).

58hh, 59k, 60aa, 61c, 62t. Bone punches.

63aa, 64j, 65j. Pointed bone objects. (use unknown).

66i, 67ii, 68n. Bone objects. (use unknown).

69x. Bone implement probably used in flaking flint arrows spears, etc.

70b, 71v, 72k. Bone objects. (use unknown).

73aa, 74x. Bone points.

75x, 76s, 77x, 78hh, 79j. Bone knives and possibly "scrapers."

80x. "Comb" made from an antler. (Believed to be the only object of its kind ever found).

81hh. Bone "buckle."

82hh. Antler object. (use unknown).

83hh, 84t, 85v. Antler-tip spear points. (probably from British America).

86aa, 87aa, 88aa, 89a, 90a, 91cc, 92hh, 93f, 94t, 95aa. Bone fish-hooks, peculiarly notched on outer curve of elbow.

96v. Pottery pipe representing an animal with four legs.

97s. Anklets or bracelets made from elk antler.

98x, 99x, 100x. Anklets or bracelets made from elk antler.

101x, 102x, 103x. Anklets or bracelets made from elk antler.

104s, 105s. Bracelets made from elk antler.

106a. Pottery pipe made to represent bird soaring—head missing.

107a. Bone fishhook.

108bb. Pottery pipe representing sitting bird. (A peculiar feature of this pipe is that its bill, which is out of all proportion to its head, is armed with teeth. When found it was painted red).

109a, 110d, 111h, 112b. Long bone beads.



(108bb—Actual size)

113ll, 114ll, 115ll, 116ll. Small bone beads.

117x. Flat bone bead.

118cc, 119j. Mandible or jawbone of deer. (use unknown). Two grooves have been made in the inside of the jaw, cutting down through the teeth. Archeologists are not determined what use these objects were put to. The bone bears an unusually high polish.

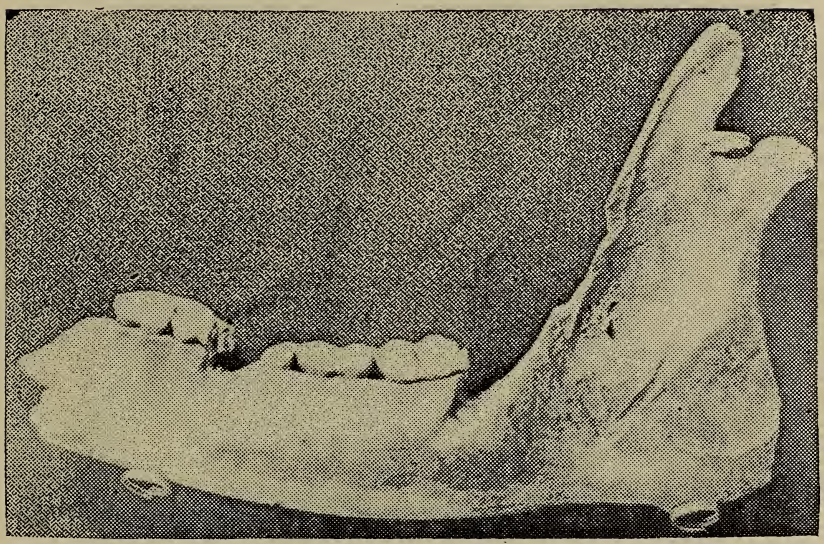
120d. Stone bead.

121j. Long shell bead.

122ii, 123ii, 124ii, 125ii. Clay objects supposed to be beads. These objects are unknown in American archeology.

126s. Stone pendant.

127t, 128h, 129j. Shell gorgets. (unio).
130j. Shell ornament. (unio).
131s. Stone pendant.
132o, 133k. Shell ornaments. (unio).
134h. Notched shell. (unio).
135d. Grooved shell. (unio).
136q. Perforated shell. (unio).
137x. Fish carved out of unio shell.
138a. Notched shell. (unio).
139g, 140u. Shell ornaments. (unio).
141cc. Shell carved in form of fish tail. (unio).
142x. "Periwinkle" shell.



(118cc—Slightly reduced)

143x. "Periwinkle" shell.
144f, 145ss, 146a, 147l, 148n. Perforated shells. (unio).
149x, 150k, 151cc. Shell objects. (use unknown). (unio).
152cc. Soapstone pipe. When drilling this pipe the artisan split it into two pieces which were found eight feet apart, fitting perfectly.
153t, 154cc. Stone pipes.
155j. Stone pipe.



(478v—Reduced to one-fourth)



(401j—Actual size)



(86aa, 89a, 90a, 93f—Actual size. Central object shows method of making fishhook from split bone. Hook partly formed and notch cut at outside edge of elbow ready to break off.)

156ii. Stone pipe.

157gg. Shell gorget of unusual pattern. (unio).

158nn. Fish carved out of unio shell.

159t. Unio shells perforated at the hinge. (This pair of shells was found side by side and are evidently from the same fish. The perforation suggests that they were tied together and when fastened to the ankle of a person would jingle. They also suggest the origin of the bell).

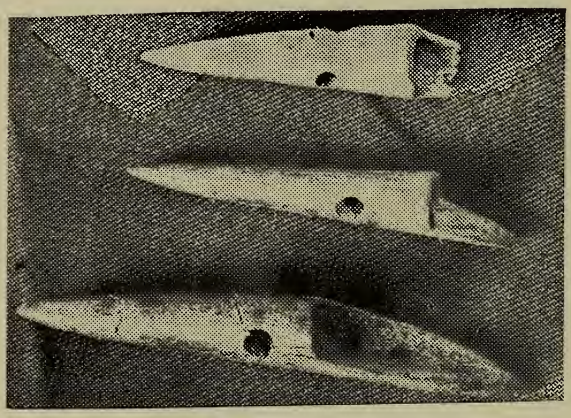
160v, 161x. Stone pendants.

162cc, 163qq, 164a, 165j. Fish carved out of unio shell.

166d, 167ll, 168hh, 169j, 170u. Shell pendants. (unio).

171x, 172x. Shell disc beads. (unio).

173a. Tooth of quadruped.



(83hh, 84t, 85v—Slightly reduced)

174a, 175s, 176k, 177k, 178h, 179l, 180f, 181f, 182f, 183f, 184f, 185l, 186l, 187l, 188l, 189u, 190u, 191u, 192u, 193u, 194u, 195j, 196j, 197j, 198j, 199j, 200j, 201j, 202j, 203j, 204j, 205a, 206s, 207s, 208s, 209x, 210h, 211h, 212h, 213h, 214ss, 215v, 216v, 217v, 218x, 219x, 220x, 221x, 223x. Bone needles or punches. The method of using such implements was by punching a hole in whatever was being sewed and then inserting split sinew.

224l. Bone fishhook.

225j. Stone pestle or upper milling stone.

226j. Stone mortar or lower milling stone.

227f. Hematite, which was probably ground for paint.

228x. Pumicestone implement, probably used as we use sandpaper.

229a. Stone club head.

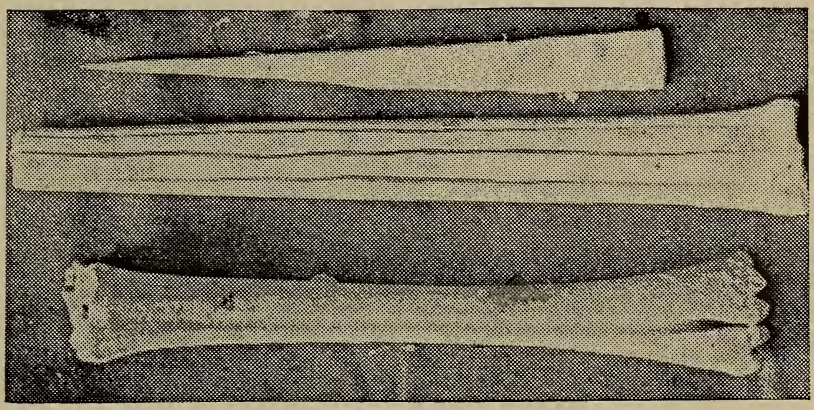
230s. Stone mortar used for grinding paint.

231ee. Represents human head made of clay and burned.

232j. Represents human head made of clay and burned.

233d. Represents human head made of clay and burned.

234a. Human head carved out of pink soapstone. (According to well known American archeologists this object is considered an important find. There is nothing in American archeology at all like it. It has been examined by celebrated scientists who have been unable to place it in American archeology.



(35, 36, 37u—Reduced one-half)

235s, 236s, 237k, 238x, 239a, 240k, 241j, 242s, 243i, 244i, 245f, 246j, 247x, 248x, 249v. Arrowshaft smoothers made of Dakota sandstone. (It is supposed an arrowshaft was placed in the groove and worked back and forth until it was of the proper smoothness.

250a, 251j, 252h. Stone club heads.

253i, 254p. Discoidal or pitted stones. (use unknown).

255a, 256f, 257b, 258l, 259v. Pitted stones.

260u. Metate or lower mill stone. (material Dakota sandstone).

261n. Stone object. (use unknown).

262x, 263f, 264x, 265ii, 266t, 267h, 268u, 269a, 270e, 271x. Ungroved axes or celts.

272u, 273f, 274x. Leg bones of quadruped, showing how flint knife was used.

275x, 276f. Flint punches.

277 and 278s. Flint knife socketed in haft of antler when found.

279k. Double pointed bone implement. (use unknown).

280k. Bone object, probably a true "flint flaker."

281k. Bone hoe or digging tool. (made from scapula of quadruped).

282k. Antler object. (use unknown).

283u, 284p, 285ii, 286f, 287x, 288x, 289y, 290aa, 291j, 292a, 293t, 294j, 295f, 296h, 297b, 298i, 299i, 300x, 301aa, 302s. Stone knives.

303hh. Hafted flint "scraper." (socketed when found).

304g, 305a, 306-307-308x, 309ii, 310a, 311u, 312bb, 313x, 314i, 315q, 316l, 317t, 318q, 319s, 320s, 321a, 322d, 323d, 324j, 325s, 326aa, 327z, 328z, 329z, 330ii, 331jj, 332qq, 333a, 334a. Stone "scrapers" supposed to have been used in dressing hides or skins.

335j, 336h, 337h, 338f, 339l, 340x, 341n, 342n, 343cc, 344s, 345x, 346b, 347u, 348u, 349x, 350aa, 351xx, 352a, 353k, 354a, 355v, 356d, 357cc, 358h, 359j, 360x. Stone projectile points or arrow heads.

361-362-364-365-366-367-368-369-370k, 371h, 372x, 373g, 374g, 375u, 376e, 377ii, 378z, 379aa, 380u, 381p, 382p, 383o. Pot "lugs" or handles through which a cord or thong was drawn to facilitate carrying.

384a, 385l, 386l, 387s, 388t, 389p, 390u. Hoes or digging tools formed from shoulderblade or scapula of large quadruped.

391v. Antler. (Shows how bracelets or other objects were cut off).

392f, 393v, 394x. Scapula implements possibly used for cutting grass. (These implements are very highly polished at the handle end, showing a glossy surface which would naturally come from much use in the hands).

395b. Antler implement supposed to have been used as a pick.

396t. Hoe or digging tool formed from the horn and skull of a bison. (Believed to be the only implement of its kind).

397b. Antler "pick."

398s, 399e, 400c. Antler "picks."

401j. Pottery pipe in the form of a frog or toad. (When found it was colored a bright vermillion with mineral paint).

402z. Pottery pipe.

403j. Unbaked pottery pipe.

404f, 405a, 406u, 407b, 408aa, 409f, 410l (restored), 411ll, 412v, 413s, 414q. Pottery pipes of hitherto unknown designs.

415nn. Bone carving representing head of a snake.

416u, 417j, 418l, 419s, 420s, 421v. Unio shell spoons.

422u. Potshard.

423f. Potshard upon which is an incised drawing of a wild turkey (probably the only decoration of its kind ever found on a pot in America).

424ll. Potshard.

425kk. Rimshard.

426j. Rimshard.

427pp. Incised rimshard.

428x. Incised rimshard.

429j. Pot lug decorated with incised drawing of a rising sun.

430f. Small rimshard.

431-432-433-434x. Incised rimshards.

435f. Incised potshard.

436o. Half of a small pot.

437j. Decorated pot lug.

438bb. Incised rimshard.

439f. Incised rimshard.

440s. Incised rimshard, evidently part of a highly decorated bowl, with singular handle or attachment.

441l. Part of a bowl. (A singular feature is that it resembles a bird sitting on its nest. One lug represents a bird's head, while the lug opposite represents its tail. Believed to be the only pot of its kind ever found).

442v. Pottery bowl.

443t. Pottery bowl.

444ll. Orange-colored pot. (very rarely found in Nebraska).

445t, 446ff, 447v, 448n, 449h, 450s, 451j. Small bowls.

452l. Spoon-shaped object of pottery.

453j. Rimshard.

454x. Pot lug.

455j. Phallus. (boxed).

456s. Pottery pipe. The probable motif of this object is an alligator.

457dd. Shell gorget of very superior workmanship.

458l, 459l. Rimshards.

460s. Bowlshard.
461b, 462b, 463x, 464x. Rimshards.
465l. Lugshard.
466hh. Rimshard.
467b, 468l. Rimshards.
469n. Pot lug.
470j, 471u, 472x, 473x. Rimshards.
474l Pot. (partially restored).
475l. Pot. (partially restored).
476i. Pot.
477l. Pot. (partially restored).
478v. Pot.
479z. Pot. (partially restored).
480l. Pot. (partially restored).
481pm. Pottery pipe embellished with singular engraving of what is intended to represent a soaring bird. (x).
482pm. Human skull wall—calcined. (x).
483y. Leaf-shaped flint knife.
484pm. Mandible of deer peculiarly grooved. (use unknown). (x).
485pm. Pink soapstone pipe. (x).
486l. Pointed bone.
487l. Disc-shaped shell beads.
488l. Pointed bone.
489l. Unio shell perforated near hinge.
490xx. Pottery pipe.

(x)—Entries in Catalogue so marked came from what is known as the "Cannibal House," where the remains of seventeen human beings were found under circumstances which indicate a feast on human flesh had been in progress. Parts of seventeen skulls and a barrel full of other human bones and various implements, excepting those mentioned in this Catalogue, are in the Peabody Museum of Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass. —(See "Records of the Past," May-June, 1913.)

Chase Pub. Co. Press, Omaha.

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